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### AMENDMENT IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (currently amended):

A Christmas tree bag comprising:

a sheet having a top end, a bottom end, and two opposing sides; ~~mating closure means on opposing sides thereof such that when said closure means are fully mated, said sheet forms a bag, open on each end, of a size to accommodate a Christmas tree therein, and that when said closure means are partially mated, said sheet forms a tree skirt;~~

a mating closure secured along said opposing sides such that when said mating closure is fully mated, said sheet forms a bag open on said top end and said bottom end of a size to accommodate a Christmas tree therein;

an upper drawstring along the top end of said sheet operable to ~~substantially~~ close said open top end of said bag; and

a lower drawstring along the bottom of said sheet operable to ~~substantially~~ close said open bottom end of said bag; and

wherein said mating closure when partially closed, said sheet forms a tree skirt that is positionable about the trunk of the Christmas tree to cover a tree stand to which the trunk of the Christmas tree is inserted.

Claim 2 (currently amended):

The ~~invention~~ Christmas tree bag of Claim 1, wherein said mating closure means comprises a zipper fastener is selected from a group consisting of a zipper fastener and a hook and loop fastener.

Claim 3 (canceled):

Claim 4 (currently amended):

The ~~invention~~ Christmas tree bag of Claim 1, further comprising: a handle attached to the exterior of said bag.

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at least one handle attached to an exterior surface of said bag along a longitudinal axis thereof.

Claim 5 (canceled):

Claim 6 (currently amended):

The ~~invention~~ Christmas tree bag of Claim 1 wherein said bag is ~~substantially~~ cylindrical.

Claim 7 (currently amended):

The ~~invention~~ Christmas tree bag of Claim 1 wherein said bag is ~~substantially~~ tapered to follow the shape of the tree.

Claims 8-9 (canceled):

Claim 10 (currently amended):

A method for collecting fallen needles from a Christmas tree having a trunk, ~~said the~~ Christmas tree and trunk being supported by a tree stand, the method comprising the steps of:

~~providing a sheet having a top end, a bottom end, and mating closure means on opposing sides thereof such that when said closure means are fully mated, said sheet forms a bag open on each end, of a size to accommodate a Christmas tree therein, and that when said closure means are partially mated, said sheet forms a tree skirt;~~

~~— providing an upper drawstring along the top end of said sheet operable to substantially close said open top end of said bag;~~

~~— providing a lower drawstring along the bottom end of said sheet operable to substantially close said open bottom end~~ opposing sides, a mating closure secured along said opposing sides such that when said mating closure is fully mated, said sheet forms a bag open on said top end and said bottom end of a size to accommodate a Christmas tree therein, an upper drawstring along the top end of said sheet operable to close said open

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top end of said bag, a lower drawstring along the bottom of said sheet operable to close said open bottom end of said bag, and wherein said mating closure when partially closed, said sheet forms a tree skirt;

placing said sheet around the Christmas tree;

partially mating said closure means ~~thereby forming the~~ forming said sheet into a tree skirt;

covering ~~said the~~ tree stand with said tree skirt ~~the partially mated bag;~~

drawing the lower drawstring to ~~substantially~~ close said bottom end around the trunk of the Christmas tree; and

collecting any fallen needles in the tree skirt;

Claim 11 (currently amended):

The method of Claim 10 further comprising the steps of:

raising the said top end up over the Christmas tree;

fully mating said closure means ~~thereby forming the~~ to form said sheet into a ~~tree~~ the bag; and

drawing the upper drawstring ~~substantially~~ closed, wherein the Christmas tree and any fallen needles collected by said tree skirt are enclosed in the bag.

Claims 12-18 (canceled)

Claim 19 (new):

A Christmas tree storage and transport bag which is transformable into a decorative tree stand skirt that is adapted to collect fallen needles, the Christmas tree bag comprising:

a sheet having a top end, a bottom end, and two opposing sides;

a mating closure secured along said opposing sides such that when said mating closure is fully mated, said sheet forms a bag open on said top end and said bottom end of a size to accommodate a Christmas tree therein, wherein said bag is cylindrical and tapered;

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an upper drawstring along the top end of said sheet operable to close said open top end of said bag;

a lower drawstring along the bottom of said sheet operable to close said open bottom end of said bag;

at least one handle attached to an exterior surface of said bag along a longitudinal axis thereof; and

wherein said mating closure when partially closed, said sheet forms a tree skirt that is positionable about the trunk of the Christmas tree to cover a tree stand to which the trunk of the Christmas tree is inserted.